

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicants have amended claims 7 and 11 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicants regard as their invention; the amendments incorporate the aspects of "micro duct" as that term is defined in the specification and illustrated in the drawings and, thus, do not constitute new matter. Claims 7-12 remain pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 7-12 as being anticipated by Carney, *et al.* (US 5,142606). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claims 7 recites:

7. An apparatus for flexible installation of optical patch cables in a telecommunication station between a plurality of systems housed in racks within the station, said apparatus comprising:

a plurality of preinstalled micro ducts for guidance of the patch cables between ones of said plurality of systems, each micro duct comprising a tube having first and second end openings proximate to first and second ones of said plurality of systems to be coupled by a patch cable, said end openings providing the only access to the pathway of each said tube and adapted to receive the patch cable for insertion into and guidance through the micro duct without having direct access to the pathway of said tube along the length of each said micro duct. (emphasis added)

The Applicants invention addresses the problem of interconnected systems housed in racks within a telecommunications station. Typically, a significant number of patch cables must be coupled between systems in different racks, often leading to a tangle of interconnecting cables. When it is necessary to uninstall or reinstall equipment, the tangle of cables makes it difficult to easily remove and replace the necessary

interconnecting cables. To solve this problem, Applicants invention utilizes a plurality of micro ducts for guidance of patch cables between the systems. Each micro duct is formed from a tube having first and second end openings that are positioned proximate to first and second ones of the plurality of systems to be coupled by a patch cable. The end openings provide the only access to the pathway of each tube and are adapted to receive a patch cable for insertion into and guidance through the micro duct without having direct access to the pathway of the tube along its length. Using such a system of preinstalled micro ducts allows for each patch cable to be easily withdrawn from its corresponding micro duct without interfering with the remaining installed patch cables. Similarly, a new patch cable can be easily inserted in and through a micro duct without interference from other previously-installed patch cables.

The Examiner's rejection is based on the teachings of Carney. Carney, however, only discloses a conventional rack system employing open cable trays. The Examiner points to element 42 and states that it is a "micro duct." Element 42, however, is "trough-shaped" (column 5, line 1), meaning it has a top opening along its length. In contrast, the Applicants claim a rack system utilizing micro ducts, which are disclosed as comprising tube structures which are not open along their length. Therefore, Carney fails to anticipate the invention as recited in claim 7. Whereas claim 11 recites analogous limitations, that claim is also not anticipated by Carney. Furthermore, whereas claims 8-10 and 12 are dependent from claims 7 and 11, respectively, and include the limitations thereof, those claims are also not anticipated.

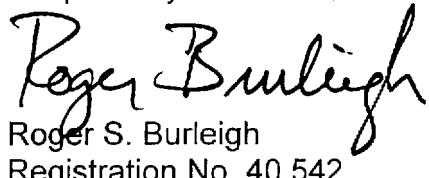
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 7-12.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,


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